

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1372

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6677

FROM AMBASSADOR SEELYE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: SUNNI LEADER WORRIES ABOUT LEFT, DISTRUSTS U.S.

1. SUMMARY: ISLAMIC LEAGUE PRESIDENT WAZZAN IS CONCERNED ABOUT LACK OF ENTREE FOR LEBANESE YOUTH INTO POLITICAL SYSTEM, AND CONSEQUENT TENDENCY OF YOUTH TO DRIFT TO LEFT RADICAL CAMP. LEFTISTS, WHO HAVE GAINED MUCH GROUND IN LEBANON IN LAST YEAR, MAY NOW BE DEVELOPING VESTED INTEREST IN PARTITION. WAZZAN IS DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF U.S. ROLE, BELIEVING IT TO BE DOMINATED BY CONCERN FOR ISRAEL. END SUMMARY.

2. I PAID CALL ON CHAFIC WAZZAAN, PRESIDENT OF SUPREME ISLAMIC COUNCIL (SUNNI) JULY 26.

3. LEFTISM AND DISAFFECTION OF YOUTH. WAZZAN SAID THAT KEY PROBLEM OF LEBANESE POLITICAL SYSTEM WAS THAT IT GAVE NO ENTREE TO YOUTH. ON MARONITE SIDE, EVEN YOUNGER "LEADERS" OWED THEIR POSITION TO STATUS AND ATTITUDES OF THEIR FATHERS. FOR EXAMPLE, FRANGIE
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APPOINTED HIS SON MINNISTER--SOMETHING UNHEARD OF IN

DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES. ON MOSLEM SIDE, OLD MEN DO NOT TAKE YOUNG MEN SERIOUSLY AND TEND MAKE THEM ERRAND BOYS. WAZZAN, AT AGE 50, THINKS OF HIMSELF AS PART OF THE "IN-BETWEEN" GENERATION, AND HAS HAD TO STRUGGLE PERSONALLY TO ATTAIN HIS PRESENT POSITION. IT WAS THEREFORE ONLY NATURAL THAT LEFT HAD REAL APPEAL TO YOUNG LEADERS.. JUNBLATT IS ONLY ELDER LEBANESE LEADER WHO HAS OPENED HIS ARMS TO YOUTH, AND THAT IS IMPORTANT REASON THEY GATHER AROUND HIM. COMMUNISM, WAZZAN SAID, IS LONG-TERM DANGER IN BOTH LEBANON AND THROUGHOUT ARAB WORLD. THE GERM IS ALREADY PLANTED IN LEBANON BY PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT RADICALS.

4. TRENDS TOWARD PARTITION. WAZZAN SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED TO LEARN IN PAST FEW DAYS THAT CAMILLE CHAMOUN, ON FRENCH TELEVISION, HAD SAID CATEGORICALLY THAT PARTITION WOULD BE VIABLE. ONN LEFT, HE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED SECCRET REPORT RECENTLY, SUGGESTING THAT JUNBLATT, TOO, HAD PLANS FOR PARTITION, AND FEARED THAT JUNBLATT'S ANNOUNCED ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN AREAS OF LEFTIST INFLUENCE WAS PART OF THAT INTENT. LEFTISTS HAVE GAINED MUCH IN LEBANON IN LAST YEAR. IF LEBANON IS REUNITED, THEY WOULD BE RETURNED TO THEIR FORMER WEAK STATUS. THEREFORE, THEY MAY SEE THEIR OWN IDEOLOGICAL INTEREST BEST SERVED BY PARTITION. I TOLD HIM CATEGORICALLY THAT USG OPPOSES PARTITION AND REITERATED THE WELL-KNOWN DISADVANTAGES THEREOF.

5. U.S. ROLE. WAZZAN THOUGHT U.S. COULD DO LITTLE IN LEBANON TO BE HELPFUL BECAUSE OF ITS COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. AT SAME TIME, HE SAID U.S. HAS A GRAVE DUTY TO ACT RESPONSIBLY AS FREE WORLD LEADER. MILLIONS OF U.S. DOLLARS, HE SAID, IN LONG RUN WOULD NOT ASSURE SURVIVAL OF AN ALIEN ITY AEL IN ARAB WORLD CREATED BY DISPLACING PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. PALESTINIAN CAUSE IS ARAB CAUSE. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT USG RELATIONS WITH ARAB GOVERNMENTS ARE GOOD, AND THAT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ARABS AND AMERICANS FOURISH, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE CLAIMED THAT ARAB POPULAR FEELINGS ARE BASICALLY ANTI-AMERICAN. IN PRESENT SITUATION, IF INDEED U.S. SINCERELY HOPES FOR LEBANESE-LEBANESE RECONCILIATION (WHICH I HAD STRESSED), IT COULD ENCOURAGE EFFORTS OF SARKIS AND HELP CREATE AN AMBIENCE FAVORABLE TO MODERATE REFORM IN LEBANON.

6. COMMENT: WAZZAN'S PERCEPTIONS OF ROLE OF

LEBANESE YOUTH ARE INTERESTING. THIS IS FIRST TIME I HAVE
HEARD IT SAID THAT LEBANESE LEFT MAY BE DEVELOPING
VESTED INTEREST IN PARTITION. THIS COULD WELL BE THE
CASE AND, IF SO, INDICATES AN ODD COINCIDENCE OF INTERESTS
WITH REGARD TO MARONITE RIGHTISTS AND
MOSLEM LEFTISTS.
HUNT

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